

Dear Siblings in Christ:

As we approach the season of Thanksgiving, it might seem difficult to find a whole lot to be thankful for. Around the globe, war, famine, disease and disaster appear to be raging unchecked, and whatever political courage that would be needed to address such issues seems to have evaporated. At home, our nation is experiencing bitter internal divisions, and our economic spectrum is rapidly separating into two groups: the ultra-wealthy and everybody else. In the face of such trials, the Church has lost much of its footing in our society, with attendance and participation dwindling, and her influence in the wider culture virtually nonexistent.

In the midst of all this, plus whatever personal tribulation we may be enduring, it can be hard to swallow these words of Paul: "...give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:18). In all circumstances? Really Paul? It is helpful to remember that Paul is simply echoing the quiet faith of others who put their trust in God during hard times. The prophet Habakkuk lived in the 7th Century BC, and the Lord revealed to him that Babylon would soon execute God's judgment on the people of Israel. Habakkuk understood, but was concerned that the wicked would prevail. God assured him that they, in turn, would be dealt with. The immediate future, however, was very grim for Israel.

So the question becomes, how can the people of God experience hope when their world is crashing down around them? Why does God not spare us from trouble? We need to remember that trouble comes to all people, whether they belong to God or not. The world is in a fallen state because of human sinfulness and rebellion against God, and while sometimes the trouble that we face is directly due to our own bad choices, most of the time it's simply because the world is broken.

The good news is that God did not leave us in our sorry condition, but by taking human form in Jesus Christ, he took all the trouble of the world on himself, not so we could avoid trouble, but so our trouble would be redeemed, and that we could know genuine peace and hope. While Habakkuk could not glimpse all that God intended for his people in the Messiah, he could still proclaim trust in God in the face of terrible evil: "Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail, and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation." (Habakkuk 3:17-18)

Friends, we have the great privilege and responsibility of declaring the everlasting mercy and love of God, who has promised that all things will ultimately work for his glory and our good. And for that, we can all give thanks.

Yours in Christ,

Ed

## October Presbytery Meeting Highlights & Actions Taken

The October Presbytery meeting opened with a warm welcome and prayer, recognizing first-time commissioners, corresponding members, and visitors. A quorum was declared, and both the docket and consent agenda were approved. Items on the consent agenda included approval of previous meeting minutes, the transfer of Rev. Choonki Kim, and the dissolution of the pastoral call for Mari Turner.

Reports were shared by the Stated Clerk, Transitional General Presbyter, and several presbytery teams, including updates on session minutes and a disciplinary matter currently under review.

The Coordinating Team brought several recommendations that were approved by the body:

Ed Rees was elected as Treasurer.

An endowment fund was established to support presbytery work and ministries.

Emergency spending authority was granted for specific committees when necessary.

After thoughtful discussion, the Presbytery approved a new per capita funding plan. For 2026, the Presbytery portion will be \$12.40, and the Budget & Finance Initiative Team (BFIT) will develop long-term recommendations for future years. The 2026 Operating Budget and the alternative per capita plan were also approved.

Worship was held mid-day, featuring music, a sermon by Rev. CeCe Armstrong, and the celebration of Communion. The offering collected during worship supported the Anti-Racism Fund.

Committee reports included the enrollment of two new inquirers, the approval of minimum salary standards, and the welcoming of Rev. Nikki Passante as a member-at-large. The Nominating Committee presented a slate of new nominees, and the 2026 Coordinating Team was approved.

Announcements highlighted an upcoming trip to Turkey and a leave of absence for Anita Green.

The next stated meeting of the Presbytery is scheduled for February 28, 2026, with the location to be announced. The meeting closed with prayer and adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

A special thank you to Nacoochee Presbyterian Church and Rev. John Harrison for their warm hospitality and gracious hosting of the Presbytery.



# Reminder: Reviewing 2024 Session Minutes

Dear Clerks of Session,

Grace and peace to you! As we close out the year, this is a friendly reminder that each Session's minutes and required policies for 2024 need to be reviewed. Thank you for your continued faithfulness in maintaining these important records that tell the story of your congregation's ministry and our shared life together as a presbytery.

You may complete your review in one of the following ways:

## Express Review

Email or mail the following documents:

Session Records Review Checklist (signed and dated by Clerk and Moderator)

Policies on sexual misconduct and harassment, child/youth/vulnerable adult protection, anti-racism, and financial review

Copy of your 2024 budget and financial review

(Optional) Session minutes—helpful but not required

## Peer Review

Exchange minutes with another Clerk of Session, review one another's records, and each submit a signed Checklist confirming the review.

## In-Person Review

I am also happy to meet in person at your church to complete your review together.

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact me at (912) 674-6270 or [statedclerk@negapby.org](mailto:statedclerk@negapby.org)

Thank you again for your faithful service and attention to this important work.

With gratitude,

Rev. Jacob Douylliez

Stated Clerk, Northeast Georgia Presbytery



# Greater Augusta Hurricane Recovery Update

## From Emergency to Recovery

The long-term recovery effort in the Greater Augusta area is a remarkable partnership among:

The United Methodist Committee on Relief, the Red Cross, the Community Foundation of the CSRA, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Lutheran Disaster Response, Catholic Charities of South Georgia, Mennonite Disaster Relief, Christian Disaster Service, and Georgia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD).



The focus of this ministry is on unmet needs: assisting families whose insurance or personal resources cannot cover the full cost of rebuilding. Many of those served are elderly, medically fragile, or otherwise vulnerable.

Since February, 245 requests for assistance have been received, with more expected. 100 families are currently in case management with three case managers, and 35 home repair projects have already been completed.

Mennonite volunteers from Ohio will be in the area from November through March, providing complete rebuilds of homes that were beyond repair. They will be housed in a vacant middle school. Mission work teams from multiple denominations and states continue to come to Augusta, staying in host churches while helping families rebuild their homes and lives.

## How You Can Help

### **Send a Work Team:**

Consider organizing a mission work team from your congregation or partner with another church. Contact Dionte Wilder, Volunteer Coordinator, at 850-501-9392 or [dwilder@ngumc.org](mailto:dwilder@ngumc.org) for details.

### **Spread the Word:**

Share this opportunity with your friends and family in other Presbyterian congregations. They can also reach out to Dionte to participate.

### **Give Financially:**

Plan a special offering to help purchase building materials for the long-term recovery, which is expected to continue for 3–4 years.

Checks may be made payable to the Presbytery with the notation: Long Term Recovery.

### **Pray:**

Please keep in prayer the families waiting for assistance and the volunteers who have come to serve.

The presbytery gratefully acknowledges the contribution of First Presbyterian Church of Greensboro for the long-term recovery efforts in the Greater Augusta area. Their generous gift will make it possible for work teams to have the building materials needed for repairs by helping families rebuild their homes and restore hope.





## Share Your Church News!

Have a story, event, or ministry update to share? We welcome submissions for the NEGA Presbytery monthly newsletter from clergy, congregations, and ministry teams.

Send your article (Word format), title, author's name, and any photos or graphics by the 15th of each month to [newsletter@negapby.org](mailto:newsletter@negapby.org)

We also love featuring your events and celebrations on our Facebook page—let us help spread the good news happening across our Presbytery!

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## Ordination Anniversaries

We celebrate and give thanks for the NEGA clergy marking ordination anniversaries this month. The Clergy Care Committee encourages you to hold these individuals, their families, and their ministries in your prayers.

Amy Baer  
Samford Turner  
Andy Casto-Waters  
Beecher Mathes  
Dave Fahner  
Margaret Davis  
Karla Conditt Daniels  
Janet Williams  
Joan Stevens  
Paul Min  
Linda McCord  
Holly Shoaf O'Kula  
Jacob Douylliez  
Joy Pruett

## Available: Three-Octave Set of Chimes

Clayton Presbyterian Church has a three-octave set of chimes available for any church that could use them. They are approximately 30 years old and still in good condition. We recently purchased a new set, so we'd love to see these go to a congregation that can put them to use.

If interested, please contact Rev. Fred DiMaio at [cabin1@windstream.net](mailto:cabin1@windstream.net)  
Blessings,  
Clayton Presbyterian Church

## Seneca Presbyterian Church Seneca, South Carolina Position: Senior Pastor

Seneca Presbyterian Church, celebrating 150 years of ministry in the beautiful foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, is seeking a Christ-centered Senior Pastor to inspire us through God's Word and lead us in faith, fellowship, and service.

Learn more: <https://clc.pcusa.org/mdp/12833/view/>

Northeast Georgia Presbytery Colleagues and Friends,

I'd like to extend an invitation to you and your congregations to join me us in a spiritual pilgrimage to Turkey.

The invitation is wide open to any interested in exploring this "Holy Land" with us as we follow the Footsteps of Paul in Turkey.

I'll be hosting and providing biblical backgrounds for the places we'll be visiting, including Cappadocia, Pisidian Antioch, and Ephesus.

We'll also see other biblically and historically significant sites, including Patmos, where John wrote the book of Revelation; Nicaea, where church councils met in the 4th and 8th centuries to determine orthodoxy; and of course, Istanbul, significant to many religions for centuries.

The trip is October 5-18, 2026 and registration is open now.

For an online brochure, information and registration, you can visit: [www.fpccga.org/turkey2026](http://www.fpccga.org/turkey2026)

I'm receiving no commission or promotional credit for this trip in order to make it as affordable as possible.

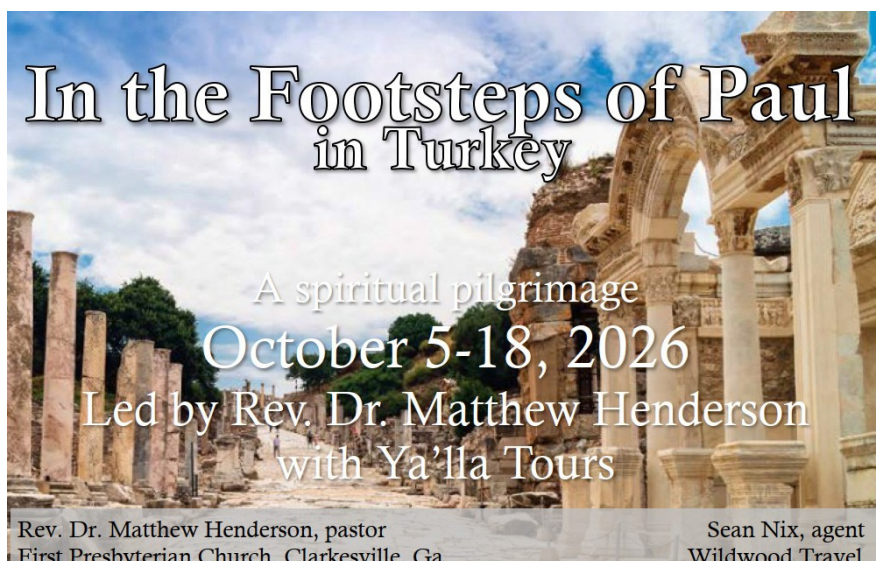
I'd be happy to discuss this further if you have any questions.

Please feel free to contact me directly.

Perhaps you'd be willing to promote this to your congregation? Here's 2 sentences and a QR code you could share:

First Presbyterian Church of Clarkesville and Rev. Dr. Matt Henderson are leading a spiritual pilgrimage to Turkey in October, 2026 and have opened the invitation to the whole presbytery. If you'd like to have more information, visit: [www.fpccga.org/turkey2026](http://www.fpccga.org/turkey2026)

Rev. Dr. Matthew D. Henderson  
Pastor  
First Presbyterian Church  
181 Jefferson St.  
Clarkesville, GA 30523



Greetings,

With autumn inviting us into a season of reflection and renewal, I'm reminded of how grateful I am for your leadership and the support you bring to your congregations and their ministries. I hope this season brings peace and clarity as you continue to guide those who serve the Church.



**THE BOARD OF PENSIONS**  
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

I'm sharing a few updates that may be useful as you walk alongside congregations and help them understand the benefits and resources available through the Board of Pensions.

#### Annual Enrollment for 2026 benefits

Through Friday, Nov. 7, plan members should log in to Benefits Connect to choose from the benefits their congregation submitted in its 2026 Employer Agreement. This is members' only chance to elect benefits or make changes to coverage for 2026 unless they have a qualifying life event during the year, such as becoming a parent or getting married.

Resources are available for congregations to help ministers and staff choose the coverage that best meets their needs for 2026 and complete Annual Enrollment:

Share materials in these toolkits to support members' decision-making.

Call the Board at 800-PRESPLAN (800-773-7752) (TTY: 711) and a representative can answer questions and assist members with Annual Enrollment in Benefits Connect.

There's still time to save with Call to Health

Now is also a great time for you and your congregations to remind plan members enrolled in PPO, EPO, or HDHP medical coverage through the Board that if they complete Level 1 of Call to Health by Nov. 7, they'll earn reduced deductible(s) for 2026 — which means they pay less out of pocket when they need care.

Exciting Call to Health updates are coming in 2026. With a new program year starting on Jan. 2, the Call to Health website and app will move to a new platform. Participants will have a more personalized experience and new ways to set and achieve their health and wellness goals. We'll share more about the new program later this fall.

Let me know how I can help

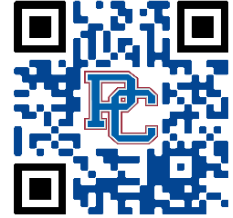
Thank you for the faithful work you do to support congregations and their leaders. If I can be of help as you guide them through these updates, I'd welcome the opportunity to connect.

Clark Simmons  
Senior Church Consultant



## EXECUTIVE CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS FUNDRAISING (ECRF)

Presbyterian College is proud to partner with **the Lake Institute on Faith & Giving** at the **Lilly Family School of Philanthropy (Indiana University)** to offer the **Executive Certificate in Religious Fundraising (ECRF)**. The executive certificate program provides the research, tools, and customized training to meet the growing needs of leaders in religious communities and fundraisers of faith-based organizations. The focus of the ECRF is on the cultural, organizational, and philanthropic practices unique to religious institutions. These practices in turn enable donors motivated by spiritual and religious values to experience the joy of generous giving. **The next course will be hosted at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, GA from May 11-13.** PC(USA) leaders can receive a Church Financial Leadership Grant through the Presbyterian Foundation to assist in attending the ECRF.



Scan QR Code to  
register for the next  
ECRF course

## THRIVING IN MINISTRY CONFERENCE

As part of PC's **Ecology of Calling Initiative** (funded by a grant from the Lilly Endowment) we are excited to sponsor a conference for clergy and other church professionals entitled **Thriving in Ministry**. The conference will occur on our campus **April 27 & 28**. PC alumni will serve as the featured speakers. **There is no cost to attend the conference, and hotel expenses will be covered for the first 20 participants who register.**



Scan QR Code to  
register for the Thriving  
in Ministry Conference

## THE PRESBYTERIAN PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP UPDATED AMOUNT! AN \$96,000 SCHOLARSHIP OVER 4 YEARS FOR PRESBYTERIANS

The Presbyterian Promise Scholarship is a commitment by Presbyterian College to recognize students for their merit and affiliation with the Presbyterian Church. PC seeks to develop students academically and spiritually in this signature scholarship. Students who are of members of Presbyterian churches, or who attend Presbyterian/Reformed secondary schools, will receive a scholarship for a minimum of **\$24,000 per year for up to four years**—that's a \$96,000 commitment to you.



Scan QR Code to apply  
or to refer a student

## SUMMER MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION EXPERIENCE

**Monday, July 6 - Thursday, July 9**, Presbyterian College is hosting a unique summer experience for middle school youth groups that combines service/mission projects with a conference-style community. **Groups will engage in morning worship, impactful service, and meaningful faith formation opportunities.** As part of our **Ecology of Calling Initiative**, this event is **free to the first 50 participants who register** (including youth and adults). Groups are responsible for their own transportation, but all lodging, meals, and conference events are provided.



Scan QR Code to  
register your group for  
the Middle School  
Summer Experience

**Contact Rev. Dr. Buz Wilcoxon, Chaplain & Dean of Spiritual Life, for any questions or to schedule a visit.** Email: [bwilcoxon@presby.edu](mailto:bwilcoxon@presby.edu) Phone: 251-281-6822

We are happy to work with you to schedule guest preaching opportunities, retreat leadership, campus visits, or any other ways that we can be a resource for your church family.



# GEORGIA PRESBYTERIES' GATHERING 2026

**February 20-21 @ @ Epworth by the Sea, St. Simons Island, GA**

Join Presbyterians from across Georgia beginning at 1 PM Friday, Feb 20th, to learn and grow together. This event is designed to inspire action, spark meaningful conversations, and equip attendees through practical workshops that benefit churches of every size. Leave encouraged, equipped, and empowered to bring your congregation—and your community—closer to God's vision of welcome, service, and faithful mission.

**Our time together** will be grounded in worship. We'll give thanks for the tables that shape our lives and imagine how we might extend them to welcome others.

**Liturgist:** The Rev. Aisha Brooks-Johnson, Executive Presbyter, Presbytery of Greater Atlanta

**Music Leader & Choir Director:** Trenton Durham, Associate Director of Worship, Roswell Presbyterian Church.

## **Join the Georgia Presbyteries Choir!**

Everyone who wants to make a joyful sound to the Lord is welcome to be part of our Conference Choir! We'll rehearse Saturday morning during the workshop block in the Jones Auditorium. No audition needed — just bring your voice and your heart for worship!

We will conclude our event with a shared celebration of communion, offering a glimpse of the great table that awaits us all.

[Click HERE for the Information Packet](https://www.savannahpresbytery.org/georgiapresbyteries/)

<https://www.savannahpresbytery.org/georgiapresbyteries/>

